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Utrum horum mavis accipe.

IN the interior of the kingdom of Thibet, exists a nation, hardly known to the rest of mankind. Like the Batuecas of Spain, they live in a retired valley, closely surrounded by mountains, and almost cut off from any means of communication with their fellow beings. No conqueror has ever invaded their peaceful retreats, nor has the banner of war been erected on the ramparts which nature has provided. Amid the revolutions of surrounding empires, they have remained

in ignorance and seclusion, unchanged by revolving centuries.

Till within a few years past, they had lived without a wish to pass the narrow boundaries of their little republic. They were savages; but their ferocity was attempered to something resembling civilisation; they were idolaters, but their superstitions still retained some strong traces of former taste. They lived in peace and harmony; their fertile valley supplied them plentifully with all the necessaries of life, and the heavens that shone above the mountains of their realm never descended in storms, or frowned with terror upon their harvests.

By some unknown means, a report brought to their ears the superior enjoyments of civilised life. The fertile valley, the serene heavens, the wood-crowned hills, were no longer delightful. The murmurs of discontent pervaded the people. The altars were neglected, the harvests forgotten; they complained of their confined situation, and sighed

for pleasures they had never felt the want of, and which they could not define to themselves.

The chiefs of the republic therefore assembled themselves in counsel; and after mature consideration, determined to send three of the wisest and most experienced men of the nation to travel in foreign countries for a few years, in order to arrive at a just estimate of the comforts or disadvantages of civilised life. The people agreed to the proposal; the men were elected and dispatched; the throbbings of hope enlivened the efforts of the inhabitants, and the voice of discontent by degrees died away.

The stated period of the absence of the ambassadors at length expired. They were hailed with the loudest applause into their long deserted country, and every bosom beat with anxiety to hear the result of their journey. The people were accordingly assembled; and a lofty platform having been erected, the youngest of the deputies ascended, and addressed

the assembly as follows.

"Ye are assembled, O my fellow-countrymen, to hear the experience of those whom you saw fit to send forth into the world in order to gather the maxims of wisdom, & the benefits of civilisation. Listen to our words, and judge not too hastily.

"We have beheld, in the course of our travels, man exerting his sovereignty over the whole earth. We have seen him bend the elements to his control, or ward off their wildest fury from his persons. The wilderness and the waste have disappeared at his approach, and where all was once dark & desolate, resplendent cities, and glorious habitations, rising up to heaven, and sparkling in the noon day sun, have burst upon our gaze. The mountain has been levelled to the plain, & the forest converted into the most delightful garden. Rivers have been turned from their channel; ocean itself driven back, and all nature made subservient to the lordly will of man. We ourselves have ridden through the ocean's foam, uninjured by the billows, unvanquished by the storm.

"If we regard the comforts and conveniences of life, the countries we have beheld have there also the decided superiority over us. Every wish is gratified, and every want supplied. The arts are extended to an infinite variety; and there is scarcely any branch of human enquiry, which human sagacity has not provided for.

"Abstracted thus from the severer duties which are unavoidably imposed upon us, the mind is enabled to take a wider range. Men of science and of leisure have directed their enquiries even to your arctic skies, and have invented instruments by which they are better enabled to survey the motions of the spheres.

"But above all, and to this, O my fellow-countrymen, I would particularly call your attention, the religion of civilised countries is even more exalted, more pure, more simple, more elevating, than our own. With them no bloody altars smoke, no victims fall. The heart alone arises up to heaven; the spirit alone wings its flight on high. On the sublime mysteries, on the glorious consequences, of this blessed belief, I will not at this time expatiate; years themselves would fail, in recounting all its

"Men of my country — I have done. Are you willing to desert your altars and your gods, your savage homes and your inhospitable abodes, your ignorance and your inconvenience, for the religion, the splendor, the wisdom, and the comfort of civilized life?" —

The orator paused. The immense audience gazed on one another a moment in amaze, and then bursting into one continuous shout of applause, exclaimed, "We will leave all for these! Away with our altars — away with our homes!" —

The second deputy now ascended the stage. He waved his hand, and the voice of the multitude again was silent.

"Deluded countrymen, pause before ye decide on so important a question. Pause, before ye plunge into what ye know not, before ye introduce arts among you, of whose utility ye are ignorant, before ye overturn the altars of your worship, for a faith which ye have not examined.

"Plausible as may appear the story of my fellow-traveller, he has left the dark side of the picture untouched. He has forgotten to tell you of insolent tyranny,

of brutal oppression; of formal restraint; of pestiferous cities; of murders, of wars, of desolations. He has not told you of the toil and suffering endured to bring into subjection the wilderness and the waste; of plague, and famine, and the sword, wasting away the inhabitants of close and crowded cities; of misery gazing upon the splendid towers & gorgeous fanes, and cursing them in the bitterness of her soul. The arts he enumerates only enslave thousands to serve the caprices of a few; while sickness, and pale mortality, stalk amid these miserable wretches, and wind them in their toil. The ocean is surmounted; has he informed you of adverse gales, and tremendous hurricanes; of being cut off from all hope or thought of succour; of perishing alone, unheard, amid the waste of waters? — Yea, the very religion he extols, I have seen the instrument of evil; I have beheld its ministers drive their goading fangs into the hearts of those whom they pretended to relieve; overthrowing kings & empires, and making all mankind pay an

implicit obedience to their control. —

"No — my countrymen, no; — shall the free spirit of man be curbed, to be confined and damped in cities? shall the unmotioned energies of nature be made subservient to the advantages, at best negative, of civilisation? and what, my friends, is civilisation? what is comfort? what is happiness? — Do all these consist in what I have enumerated? Are you to exchange liberty of soul & body for tyranny of both? Are not you civilised, if you live in harmony with one another, and fulfil all the purposes, and all the duties of life? Do not, I beseech you, suffer this madness to overtake you; reflect — pause — ponder, before you decide; scatter not your present comforts to the four winds of heaven, for joys uncertain, and advantages untried. Overturn not your sacred homes, and these altars on which our forefathers sacrificed. Fear you no sudden wrath of heaven, in listening to such proposals? Fear you not that

every storm ~~of heaven~~ shall be at once let loose to desolate and to destroy this lovely valley, which ye despise? — Pause! Oh Pause! Already do I hear the sentence of your crimes fulfilled — already do I hear the thunders from on high bursting over your devoted dwellings!" —

He paused. A silence, long and deep, hung over the assembly. At length a stifled hum ran through the people; they gazed upon the heavens, and then upon their homes; and at once every knee was bent to earth.

The elder and third deputy sprang upon the stage. He too knelt, but for a different purpose. "Grant" — he exclaimed, "Oh Almighty Father of mankind, that the hearts of this people may be enlightened to discern the true and proper way. May they kneel before thee, from whom they have so long wandered; guide them, bless them, make them thine own!" —

He arose, and the still more astonished people rose too. Again they looked on high, but the heavens were still serene,

the firmament was still unchanged.

"How long," he cried, "how long, O ye people, will ye listen to the whispers of folly, and the opinions of prejudice? How long will ye suffer yourselves to be the mock of every opinion, and the sport of every fancy? Awake, O ye that slumber in the dust, and arise from your darkness!

"Leave not your homes, your country, your possessions. Still love and cherish that native valley which gave you birth. Aspire not after all the blessings of civilisation, mingled as they are with curses. Yet far be it from me, O my countrymen, to keep you ignorant of all that we have seen. A few, but a few alone of the advantages possessed by other countries, shall be yours."—

The acclamations now rose again, and resounded throughout the valley. When it had ceased, he continued.

"The altars you love, the Gods you revere, the idols you adore, must be abandoned. A purer worship demands

your devotion. A God whose altars are in the hearts of his believers, must excite your adoration. Your sacrifices must be sacrifices of the heart, of the will, of the inclinations. Of this blessed religion proper teachers are at hand. They will tell you that to be Christians is to be civilised at once; that to acquire and keep the favor of your God, is to be happy on earth, and sure of blessedness hereafter.

"A few of the most useful arts we have learned. We want but little, & that little is soon supplied. Again I say unto you, obey the precepts of the true religion, and this valley shall know discontent no longer, industry and cheerfulness shall gladden its fields, and these streams and these mountains be smiling as their possessors."—

He descended. Wild, but beautiful, arose the voice of rejoicing over the

long despised valley. Its sound was heard beyond the hills, and the distant peasant that labored at his toil, marvelled whence it proceeded.

History relates, that the people followed the advice of the last speaker. Let him who reads imagine the consequences.

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